

Mascots of our time

A picture paints a thousand words. Similarly, a mascot can very quickly convey ideas and messages about a campaign.

A campaign is an organised series of activities meant to achieve a certain goal.

One campaign you might be familiar with is the kindness campaign organised by the Singapore Kindness Movement. Through events such as Kindness Day, Singaporeans

Laremy Lee looks at campaign mascots and their importance over the last 50 years

are encouraged to carry out acts of generosity and goodwill.

There have been countless campaigns in Singapore over the last half-century.

Campaigns instil behaviours and attitudes considered by the government and non-governmental organisations alike to be good for both individuals and the

community, said Mr Lim Tin Seng, a librarian at the National Library, Singapore. He carried out research on this topic for Campaign City: Life In Posters, an exhibition hosted by the National Library in 2013.

Very often, campaigns have mascots to represent them. For example, the Singapore Kindness Movement's mascot

is Singa the Courtesy Lion.

Mascots make it easier for people to remember and describe campaigns.

Little Red Dot presents five of these mascots, which will tell you a bit about how life in Singapore was like back when they were introduced.

Sources: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions website, The New Paper, The Straits Times, The Sunday Times



Singa the Courtesy Lion
Year of birth: 1982

Singa was born during the National Courtesy Campaign in 1982 to encourage people to be kind and considerate to one another.

A lion was chosen to represent Singapore, the Lion City.

In 2001, Singa and the campaign joined forces with the Singapore Kindness Movement.

Last year, however, Singa submitted a letter of resignation, as he was "too tired to continue facing an increasingly angry and disagreeable society", he wrote.



Teamy the Bee
Year of birth: 1982

This cartoon apian, or bee, was the mascot for the national productivity movement in 1982.

Instead of working very hard but achieving average results, productivity encourages people to work smarter to achieve better results, such as to complete more complex tasks in a shorter time.

A bee was used for the productivity movement because bees are commonly thought of as good workers.

Teamy's slogan came in the form of an advertisement jingle, or song, that had the lyrics: "Good, better, best! Never let it rest.

"Till your good is better and your better, best."

Bobo the Water-Saving Elephant

Year of birth: 1973

This pink elephant (right) had a television cartoon series that taught children to save water, an important resource for Singapore then, as it is now.

He also appeared in print and TV advertisements for the then-Public Utilities Board. In these ads, Bobo leaves the shower running while soaping himself, until he is told how to save water while bathing.

The mascot that promotes water saving today is Water Wally (far right), a bright blue water droplet introduced in 2005.



Sharity Elephant
Year of birth: 1984

Sharity's name is a combination of the words "share" and "charity". His role: to spread the message of caring and sharing through donating to charity. Some of the activities he fronted included donation drives and parades.

Like Teamy, Sharity also had a jingle. He had a group of friends, such as Lavender Lamb, his pretty next-door neighbour, and Lanky Giraffe, Sharity's best friend.

Sharity was adopted as the Community Chest's mascot because elephants live in communities and help one another. Similarly, Sharity promoted – and still promotes – the values of caring and sharing.



Captain Green
Year of birth: 1990

This cheerful frog became the mascot for the Clean and Green Week campaign in 1990, which has now evolved into Clean and Green Singapore, a year-long campaign.

Besides making appearances at roadshows and exhibitions organised by the then-Ministry of Environment, Captain Green was also the star of computer games and animated virtual tours of the environment, in which he taught young people about Singapore's greenery.

Captain Green has undergone a few image transformations. In 1997, he took on a superhero form, but has since reverted to his original, amphibious state.



Hmmm. Why are certain animals used for certain campaigns?

It has to do with symbolism, or how certain ideas are represented by certain things.

